

# A 'splashing' success for Art Center opening

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By  
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The quality of the music far outshone the weather last night as the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy with Van Cliburn as piano soloist gave the preview performance of the Garden State Art Center in Holmdel.

Playing to the accompaniment of a steady patter of rain and pealing thunder, the Philadelphians and Cliburn nevertheless made some memorable music in a program made up of Beethoven's Leonore Overture No. 3 and Grieg's Piano Concerto in A Minor.

## A CASUALTY

There were some major casualties before the evening started. In a press conference following the concert Ormandy said that because of the heavy rains several of the musicians' instruments were badly damaged together with almost all of their white jackets which were victims of a soggy backstage.

Also a casualty was Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, dropped from the program at the last minute when it was discovered that the rains had

soaked musical scores. The Fifth Symphony is scheduled to be played in the complete program tonight and Saturday night.

Despite interference from the storm and damp weather, the huge amphitheater in Telegraph Hill Park showed promise as a first rate open air theater for music. There was some loss of depth in base tones from this listener's position half way back in the amphitheater. But the overall sound was resonant and strong with orchestral details coming through clearly.

The circular auditorium designed by architect Edward Durrell, combines the best qualities of a large indoor auditorium and a fresh air music spot.

Ormandy and the orchestra opened with a relaxed, expansive reading of the Leonore Overture.

The Grieg Concerto found pianist Cliburn somewhat off his best technical form. Whether it was from the poor weather conditions or the piano itself one could not know. But he shaped the familiar music of the concerto with warmth and emotion.

The pianist's best moments came in the lyrical slow

movement and in the third movement in which he combined with the orchestra for a triumphant finale.

In the press conference later Ormandy said he had had some difficulty with orchestral balance during rehearsals but had ironed out that problem before the concert.

Asked if the weather had put stringed instruments out of tune, Ormandy answered, "I never hear my orchestra play out of tune."

## PROUD STATE

The conductor said that the state should be "very proud of this magnificent hall." He predicted that it would meet the same success that the summer outdoor festival in Saratoga, N.Y. has enjoyed since it was inaugurated two years ago.

Both Cliburn and Ormandy said the center has the special quality of "being able to hear all you are doing" during the performance.

Cliburn said "It is a great joy and pleasure to perform here at the center."

The art center's programs will include both classical and popular works to run through Aug. 31.